

BULLETIN



Meeting date: February 20, 2024

Virtual or In-Person: In-person (with virtual option)

Visitors / Guests:

- Howard Waldner
- Randy Decksheimer
- Bruce Williams (Speaker)

Announcements:

- Joan Toone directed our attention to the Silent Auction for End Polio.
- Chris Kershaw reminded us that on March 5th our club will be hosting the official visit of the 2023|2024 District Governor, Caleb Summerfelt.
- Joan Peggs reported that our travellers, who recently returned from a Mexico work trip, received a banner from the Puerto Vallarta Rotary Club while in attendance at one of their meetings; however, because attending that meeting wasn't planned ahead of time our Club did not have a banner to share in return... there's always next time.

Program Overview:

Shawn Cote introduced our guest speaker, Bruce Williams, CEO of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, co-owner of Spark Strategic Group, who has a history as a broadcast producer as well as a local on-air host and television anchor. Bruce has never been a Rotarian but once received the Paul Harris Award from the Nanaimo Daybreak Rotary Club for his involvement in their summer fundraising event, the "Nanaimo Landtubbers Race," a land-based bathtub race.

Bruce shared the following list of Chamber accomplishments, among others, which have happened under his leadership as CEO since 2020:

- Earning national recognition
- Winning the Inclusive Growth Award
- Completing the Family Business Association merger

- Relaunching the Prodigy Group
- Procuring the Belleville Terminal Redevelopment Project
- Working with Washington State Tourism
- Chamber Champions Initiative providing leadership and guidance
- Partnering with School District 61 to showcase the Guess My Job Program, where students learn “You can be what you can’t see!”

Mr. Williams emphasized social and cultural diversity as being an important value represented by and within the 1400-member strong Chamber, which he illustrated using the board of directors as an example. He also discussed some of the Chamber advocacy wins for 2023, including, but not limited to:

- Finding and keeping workers
 - Workers get skills for in-demand jobs
 - BC taps local municipalities to increase housing
 - Recognition of immigrant home-country credentials a win for the economy
 - Fund investing in construction industry workforce
- Business growth and adaptation
 - Victoria, Saanich get Citizen’s Assembly on track
 - Province extends deadline for permanent patios
 - Museum “Old Town” reopens to delight of RBCM visitors
 - Funding confirmed for Belleville Terminal redevelopment
- Safe communities at home and work
 - More police downtown
 - New measures for violent repeat offenders
 - Uber approved in Greater Victoria
 - Complex care a good step toward safer communities

Heather Aked thanked our guest for his insightful presentation, stating that the Chamber has done some incredible work, then she handed him our Club Speaker mug, to which Bruce let us in on a little secret, that he prefers to “drink a cocktail out of a mug as the ice melts slower.”

Celebrations Master:

Jack Petrie, our CM, started out having each table share something they learned about another person at the table. We found out that Sonnet Force learned, very quickly, how to use GPS navigation tool while driving in Mexico, that Vicky Pitt's mom is 99, that Howard W (one of our visitors) is a lousy golfer, and that Chris Kershaw's father was a POW in Lithuania and that's why Chris won't ever visit there.

Happy/sad dollars were given by Heather for her upcoming trip to Palm Springs where she'll play lots and lots of tennis, by Krista for all she learned at her 4-day President Elect Training in Seattle, and by Joan P for the fun trip had in Mexico.

We all sang Wynn Taylor a very Happy 80th Birthday for February 23rd, also the birthday of Rotary which turns 119 years young!

In an effort to raise money for PolioPlus (the eradication of polio, Rotary's global program) Jack MC-ed the live auction: Margaret Black (\$50 bid) won the cake thanks to Joan T's contribution (\$150 bid). Joan Firkins announced the silent auction winners and then gave away a bottle of wine to the person having the next birthday.....which was Joan Toone's in April! Total funds raised for Polio was \$496 – thank you to all who participated.

Jack P won the 50/50 (\$40) and promptly gave the money to the PolioPlus fund.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 27th is a virtual Board Meeting. Tuesday, March 5th will be an in-person only meeting with official visit from District Governor, Caleb Summerfelt.